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GROWING EMBOTHRIUMS

The trouble with Embothriums is that they naturally grow in soils that are extremely deficient in phosphate so they have evolved to be extremely adept at taking up phosphate. Consequently if you pot them in a standard compost mix they slurp up all the phosphate to toxic levels and die.

We use Nutricote (Ficote) as our CRF and its phosphate source is less soluble than that in Osmocote and we normally add single superphosphate to our mixes, but we don't for Embos and some other phosphate sensitive species. However leaving the phosphate out is not enough and we use a very low rate of CRF, also we make the mix more acid than normal, and use less trace element as well. Our actual recipe is as follows:

	grams Per 330 litre bale	grams Per cu.m.	
CRF	230	760	(quarter of our standard rate)
Micromax	60	190	(half our normal rate)
Dolodust	230	760	(half the rate we use for ericaceous)

We have evolved this over time and it works for us. They seem tolerant of all vine-weevil prophylactics.

If you buy ready mixed compost I suggest mixing one part ericaceous mix with three parts straight peat, which is how we started.

I have no recent experience of growing these on from liners, but I would suggest keeping them inside through the winter and until the frost risk has passed. Small trees can be killed by late frost, and this applies even when they are planted out. Severe winters can split the stems of mature specimens but are those a thing of the past?

Nick



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